GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEFENCE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2011
ANSWERED ON:27.08.2007
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN OFFICERS IN DEFENCE FORCES
Ajaya Kumar Shri S.;Gangwar Shri Santosh Kumar;Reddy Shri Mekapati Rajamohan;Sikdar Smt. Joytirmoyee;Singh Baba Shri K.C.

Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether growing discrimination against women officers in defence forces in terms of operations and other facilities has been reported;

(b) if so, the details of complaints received in this regard during the last three years and the status thereof;

(c) the present number of serving women officers and those who left the three services of Armed Forces during the last three years;

(d) the percentage of women officers to the total strength of Armed Forces; and

(e) the steps being taken to increase their strength and to address the gender discrimination?

Answer

MINISTER OF THE STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (SHRI A.K. ANTONY)

(a) to (e): A Statement is attached.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. 2011 FOR ANSWER ON 27.8.2007

The women officers are appointed both in Short Service and Permanent Commissions in the Medical, Nursing and Dental Services. In these Services, SSC women officers are also eligible for Permanent Commission. The women officers are also appointed as SSC officers in some select branches in the three Defence Forces. They are, however, not eligible for Permanent Commission. Women officers are treated at par with similarly placed male counterparts in terms of recruitment, training, tenure of service, promotion etc.

Writ petitions have been filed by three women officers of Air Force against non-grant of Permanent Commission, extension of Commission. The matter is subjudice. Similarly, one retired woman officer of Navy has lodged a complaint for the same.

The number of serving officers in the three Services of Defence Forces and their percentage to the total strength is as follows:

Army		Navy		Air Force	
Total strength	Percentage to the total strength	Total strength	Percentage to the total strength	Total strength	Percentage to the total strength
945	2.67	236	2.94	739	7

The number of women officers who left the three services during the last three years is 141, 37 and 111 in Army, Navy, Air Force respectively.

Several steps have been taken by the three Services to attract more women to join Armed Forces. All officers including Women Short Service Commission (SSC) officers are now eligible to hold substantive rank of Captain, Major and Lt. Colonel after 2, 6 and 13 years of reckonable service respectively. Government has also issued orders extending the tenure of SSC officers including women officers from 10 years to 14 years. The number of posts Arm/Service/Branch tenable by women officers are being constantly reviewed.

Apart from the above the following steps have been taken to address women specific issues.

(a) Commanders at all levels have been instructed to be more sensitive to the task being assigned to the women officers with special focus on
(i) providing an honourable working environment
(ii) being sensitive to the constraints faced by women officers in performing certain specified tasks and

(iii) keeping in mind displayed aptitudes while assigning non-core duties.

(b) Women officers are free to approach their Commanding Officers/Supervisors at any time to discuss their personal/official problems and seek immediate assistance and redressal of grievances.

(c) Women officers are provided with separate living accommodation in the Officers Mess.